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SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

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EXPLORING THE PLANET FOR PLANTS

PROCUREMENT SECTION
CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

Brought To You From Far Corners. Twenty-three impatiens collections have been released this year to commercial nurserymen and plant breeders by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These collections are related to the shade-loving "impatiens plants" used in gardens for many years -- but with a big difference. The twenty-three were collected in 1970 by plant explorers of USDA's Agricultural Research Service in the highlands of New Guinea and Java. The expedition was sponsored jointly by the Agricultural Research Service and the Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. Flowers of some of the plants exceed two inches in diameter with colors ranging from pure white through pastel lavender, pink and orange to dark vermillion or scarlet. Leaf and stem colors vary from green to intense dark red. In some, the leaves are beautifully variegated with white, yellow or pink. All are easily propagated by cuttings and some by seed. If you are impatient to get your hands on some of these impatiens, you must wait. The plants are not expected to be on the market until next year.

A HOUSE BUILT ON WOOD

Suddenly, It's Home. It took workmen less than eight hours to erect an attractive three-bedroom rambler, complete with electricity and plumbing, on a site near Charlottesville, Va. Financed with a loan from USDA's Farmers Home Administration, the house was ready for occupancy by a low-income rural family by nightfall. The key was not only the factory-built house, which came with interior walls prefinished and with kitchen and bathroom fixtures installed, but also a revolutionary new method of foundation construction. Instead of the traditional mortar and cinder block foundation, a wood foundation was installed. The wood foundation is plywood walling pressure treated with a preservative that resists termites and rodents. Because the new-type foundation did not require a drying out period as with masonry foundation, erection of the modular housing was begun immediately. Besides the speed in construction, other advantages of wood foundations are that they can be erected in almost any kind of weather, such as extreme cold or wet, and at less cost than conventional foundations. The wood foundation method was developed and proven by research sponsored by USDA's Forest Service in cooperation with the National Forest Products Association and the American Wood Preservation Institute.



WATCH THE BIRDIE

A Warning To Bird-Owning Travelers! If you plan to vacation abroad or in the southern California area, don't take your pet bird along. You may not get your pet back home, the U.S. Department of Agriculture warns. An outbreak of exotic Newcastle disease, an ailment fatal to pet birds and poultry -- though not harmful to people -- is the reason. Quarantines for the disease have been placed on eight southern California counties and two western Arizona counties where Newcastle erupted late last year apparently through importation of infected pet birds. To date some 42 million healthy poultry have been vaccinated and more than three million infected birds destroyed in efforts to eradicate this disease. Mynah birds and parrots, parakeets, and other birds of the parrot family are barred from entry into the U.S. because they might carry Newcastle. Although you can take your pet bird into the quarantined areas or abroad, you can't bring him back out. Your best bet this summer: Board budgie at home when you go on vacation.

WILL YOU CAN OR FREEZE THIS SUMMER?

Join The Crowd. Although advertising attention focuses on frozen main dishes and hamburger stands, don't feel lonesome if you home process some fruits and vegetables. Not surprisingly, farm folk said in a 1965-66 survey, they put up two-thirds of their year's supply of fruits and vegetables, not counting any jellies, juices, or pickles they made. And nonfarm rural families reported that they preserved a third of their supply themselves. But urbanites haven't forgotten how; those interviewed boasted of preserving a tenth of their needs at home. Where did they get their produce? From stores, friends, fruit stands, and even picked in the wild. Great grandma would be gratified.

MOVING AROUND OUTSIDE

How To Transplant and Live. The evergreen would look better on the other side of the yard or the shrub is too crowded or the young tree gets too much shade. Let's move it. However, if you tell yourself that transplanting a tree or a shrub is nothing more than digging up and planting again, you may be disappointed when your transplant dies. Horticulturists of USDA's Agricultural Research Service can give you some good tips on the "what, when, where, and how" to successful transplanting. A new 12-page publication, "Transplanting Ornamental Trees and Shrubs," (G-192) gives step-by-step instructions for digging up and replanting, care of the plant until it becomes established in its new location, and root-pruning -- the key to moving wild trees and shrubs. Among the illustrations is a plant hardiness map showing the various temperature zones throughout the U.S. Copies of the booklet are available for 10 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

A LOT OF RICE INFORMATION

In A Small Space. "How To Buy Rice" is a one-page sheet that tells a lot about rice. It explains differences between the kinds of rice -- brown, milled, instant, parboiled, short grain, medium grain and long grain -- and gives tips on use and on quality. The one-pager, part of the "How To Buy Food" series, has been prepared as camera copy for easy reproduction in quantity. Copies are available from Room 1771, Information Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

SUMMER FOOD PREVIEW

As you round-up picnic supplies, lunch fixings, and other summer food-shopping needs at the supermarket, you'll find prices rising in some departments, but holding steady in others. Stability may be helped along by the Wage Board's and Price Commission's efforts to limit increases in labor components and in profits of food prices.

Summer prices in a few departments will reflect the usual situation of seasonally smaller supplies of some items -- pork, fresh citrus and canned fruits and vegetables, for instance. So experts are saying that summer food store prices will average a little higher than in spring.

Food, the "fuel-upper" is also important as a "cooler-downer" on hot summer days. Dairy foods are the cool-fuel department; their prices are steady-as-she-goes for summer. So rely on milk, ice cream, and yogurt refreshers. For a weight-conscious cold drink try ice tea or coffee. Tea is priced no higher than last year, and coffee costs less, thanks to a larger Brazilian harvest.

Meat is the main course of any picnic. Steak, barbecued chicken, hot dogs -- this summer each candidate for your grill has a different story to tell.

Beef prices have fluctuated this year. Prices rose a few months back because production slackened when demand was heavy. But cattle supplies are up again and will stay large for summer. Retail beef prices eased in April and May. More fluctuation is possible but they may not change much during summer months, with larger beef output counter-balanced by very strong consumer preference and rising incomes to spend on beef products. Check the roasts, traditionally more reasonable, during summer months.

Pass the drumsticks! Those super-low chicken prices you have been enjoying in recent weeks are the result of record production of broilers. But prices will go up gradually as usual for summer months as supplies get smaller responding to peak demand for meals at home and in restaurants. However, chicken is still cheap and represents an outstanding buy. When fall begins, prices go down again.

Pork is another story. Pork prices always go highest in midsummer -- it's a seasonal thing. Also fewer hogs are coming to market this year, and that will reinforce higher prices. So in contrast to the specialized loins, bacon, and ham of last spring and summer, prices are returning to higher levels of two summers ago.

Lift the lid on the other dishes on your picnic table: Potato salad's main ingredient -- the spud -- is still reasonable. Last year there were so many potatoes the price didn't rise as usual during summer months. This year prices will make a small summer increase, then drop off after Labor Day. Other salad ingredients, no higher than last summer, will feature more cucumbers, carrots, and peppers, judging by the earliest reports.

Look for best vegetable buys to begin in late August and September. Locally harvested tomatoes and sweet corn hit the country stands and city stores then, and commercial summer harvests get underway in earnest.

Some facts of lettuce life: Fact One: Lettuce production is very erratic: Witness the high prices as 1972 began, followed by the low ones around Memorial Day. Fact Two: Lettuce is in prime demand in summer for cool salad makings. So, expect summer prices to be higher than in early June but still at moderate levels.

Deviled eggs taste great in the summer and do good things for the budget, too. Eggs were really low-priced in the last few months. But egg output is tapering down now as farmers cull flocks, so prices will be slowly going the other way this summer. Nonetheless, eggs will continue to be a good protein buy.

For dessert, dig in the cooler for watermelon or cantaloupes -- in larger supply this year and likely to cost about the same as last summer. Southern peaches will be more abundant, too. Their supplies peak in mid-summer.

A FAIR IDEA

Have A Housing Exhibit. Housing exhibits suitable for county fairs have been put together by a multi-agency USDA team in Pennsylvania. The exhibits consist of table-size scale models of houses designed by the Forest Service accompanied by technical information provided by the Extension Service and the Farmers Home Administration. When first used last year, the exhibits drew considerable public interest and many inquiries for literature and detailed house plans. If you are an interested county fair planner, write to the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, 6816 Market Street, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania 19082.

JUNE PLENTIFUL FOODS LIST

Pick A Plentiful. Following a nutritious tradition, June Is Dairy Month, again. Milk and dairy products are featured on the Plentiful List for June. Production of milk and dairy products continue to increase about as usual for the season, and both should be at or near their peaks in June. Other foods expected to be in abundant supply -- and most likely to bear attractive consumer prices in June -- are boiler-fryers, eggs, and split peas. For July, the Plentifuls will include turkeys, watermelons, fresh plums, and fresh vegetables.

GLACIERS, LAVA, MULE TRAINS

Explore! The 137 million acres of National Forests and National Grasslands are among our Nation's greatest natural resources. Use of these unique and valuable public properties grows each year as millions of Americans explore -- by car, by boat, by train, on foot, and even on snowshoes -- the beauty, quiet pleasures, and excitement found in nature. The Forest Service provides an array of facilities and programs designed to reveal and interpret what the forest visitor will encounter. Many of these programs are self-guiding experiences which permit the visitor to proceed at his own pace; others are activities led by skilled forest naturalists. In addition to campgrounds, picnic sites, information stations, interpretive trails, and special facilities such as look outs on the 155 National Forests, there are 24 major visitor centers. The centers are located at outstanding scenic or ecologically interesting sites and serve as hubs of visitor programs and interpretive activities and as starting points for trips of exploration. A colorfully illustrated and informative new booklet, "Explore!" describes the Centers -- from Oneonta Gorge in Oregon to Cranberry Mountain in West Virginia -- and the wonders of the forests around them. Copies of the booklet are available for 35 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

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